VIReC RESEARCHERS' GUIDE TO VA DATA

Data Issues Brief	June 2005

1. VIReC Project on Mortality Data Completed

The "VA-NDI [National Death Index] Mortality Data Merge Project," recently completed by VIReC (Min-Woong Sohn, Principal Investigator), found that the pooled use of the Medicare Files, the Social Security Administration Death Master File, BIRLS Death File, and Medical SAS Inpatient data to ascertain death compared very favorably with the NDI. VIReC is following up the study by preparing a technical report to appear on the VIReC Web site and a manuscript for publication, as well as exploring with other VA offices the development of a national registry of VA mortality data. The study abstract, with a summary description of methods and results, is available on the Health Services Research and Development Web site at http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/research/abstracts/SDR_03-157.htm.

2. SAS Files of Professional Services/Inpatient Encounters Data Available

The Health Data and Informatics Program, VHA Office of Information, has announced availability of SAS files and online reports of data in the new Professional Services (Inpatient Encounters) datasets. (See *Data Issues Brief* April 2005.) File names and other details are provided on the VHA Intranet at http://vaww.aac.va.gov/npcd/new/Default.php.

3. New HIPAA Privacy Rule Information

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, recently issued a new publication on application of the Privacy Rule to health services research. "Health Services Research and the HIPAA Privacy Rule" (NIH Publication No. 05-5308, May 2005) is available at http://privacyruleandresearch.nih.gov/healthservicesprivacy.asp

4. VIReC and HERC Offer Cyber-Seminars in June

Date	Topic	Presenter
June 8	VA Pharmacy Databases: Research Application	Noreen Arnold, M.A.L.S., M.S., VIReC
June 15	HERC Health Economics Course #8: VA Economic Datasets I: Utilization	Paul Barnett, Ph.D., HERC
June 22	HERC Monthly Cyber Seminar	Ciaran Phibbs, Ph.D., HERC

Detailed information and registration for VA Health Services Research & Development Service cyber-seminars is available at http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/cyber_seminars/.